
COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

PREFACE

Chiltern Hills Academy is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We encourage every person in our community to:

Create, Aspire and Excel to 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

We achieve this through our dedication to the seven Christian values of love, hope, self-discipline, compassion, forgiveness, respect and honesty.

We are a community in which staff, students and parents work collaboratively to develop a learning environment and organisation which is spiritual, safe, innovative, creative and exciting. All members of the Academy are motivated and inspired by the vision to give their best and to play a full part in the life of the school and in their own developing lives.

The Governors at Chiltern Hills Academy are committed to achieving the vision and values. They oversee and monitor this policy to ensure that this is being achieved.

INTRODUCTION

The Governing Board of Chiltern Hills Academy has adopted this procedure to deal with concerns or complaints.

The complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including a member of the public, may raise a concern or make a complaint to the school about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides.

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

1. AIMS

1. The aims of this policy and related procedures are to provide a framework for the resolution of complaints which:

1.1 allows for their resolution informally and sets out the school's formal procedures where this is not achievable;

1.2 is easily accessible and publicised, simple to understand and use and impartial and non-adversarial;

1.3 respects people's desire for confidentiality;

1.4 addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary, and;

1.5 provides information to Trustees and/or the school's senior leadership/management team so that services can be improved.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

2. SCOPE & APPLICATION

- 2.1 This policy applies to both concerns and complaints; these are defined in section 5 below.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to matters for which there are separate statutory procedures (e.g. admission appeals, exclusion reviews, special educational needs appeals etc)
- 2.3 This policy is not limited to parents or carers of children registered at Chiltern Hills Academy.
- 2.4 Requests for financial awards, such as claims for compensation or damages are beyond the scope of this policy.
- 2.5 All complainants should be aware that regardless of the nature of a complaint and whether or not it is upheld, complainants are not entitled to details of any related sanctions imposed on staff, students or parents.
- 2.6 Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the Principal or Chair of Governors may determine, if appropriate, that such a complaint warrants an investigation.
- 2.7 Complaints must be received within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this timeframe only if exceptional circumstances apply.
- 2.8 We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.
- 2.9 This policy does not cover complaints about services provided by other, unrelated providers who may use school premises or facilities for their own business. They should have their own complaints policy and procedures and should be contacted directly.

3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 This policy has been prepared to meet the school's responsibilities under:
- 3.1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- 3.1.2 Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, March 2017);
- 3.1.3 Education and Skills Act 2008;
- 3.1.4 Equality Act 2010.

4. PUBLICATION AND AVAILABILITY

- 4.1 This policy is published on the school's website.
- 4.2 This policy is available in hard copy on request.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

4.3 A copy of this policy is available for inspection from the school office during a working day.

4.4 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

5. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 The school differentiates between a concern and a complaint.

5.1.1 A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

5.1.2 A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

5.2 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

5.2.1 References to **school days** mean Monday to Friday, when a school is open to students during term time. The dates of terms are published on the school's website.

5.3 Timescales for each stage of the complaints procedure are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. It is expected that the management of every complaint will progress in a timely manner.

5.4 The school will aim to resolve all complaints efficiently and promptly and complainants are encouraged to bring any matter causing concern to the school's attention as soon as possible.

5.5 Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay to the timescales for a stage of the complaints procedure, the school will notify the complainant and inform them of the new timescales as soon as possible.

6. MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS

6.1 This policy allows for complaints to be considered at three stages:

Stage 1: Informal raising of a complaint. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 1.

Stage 2: A formal complaint in writing. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 2.

Stage 3: Referral to a Complaint Panel. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 3.

7. EXPECTED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

7.1 Attention is drawn to the information included in Appendix 4, which has been developed having regard to the Department for Education's Best Practice for School Complaints Procedures 2019 for maintained schools.

8. RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the Information & Records Management Society's toolkit for schools.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

8.2 The school keeps a written record of all formal complaints, including the following:

8.2.1 Whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or Stage 3.

8.2.2 The action taken as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

8.3 In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept only for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.¹

8.4 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of an inspection or under other legal authority or court order.

8.5 Where a complaint has reached Stage 2, the Principal must inform the Chair of Governors so that s/he is aware of the complaint.

9. COMPLAINTS TO THE EDUCATION SKILLS AND FUNDING AGENCY (ESFA)

9.1 Complainants who are dissatisfied with the decision of a Complaint Panel may contact the ESFA, which will consider the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State.

9.2 The ESFA's contact details are as follows:

Online: Via the ESFA's School Complaints Form

By post: Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

In accordance with the terms of reference of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse all schools are required to retain information which relates to allegations (substantiated or not) of organisations and individuals who may have been involved in, or have knowledge of child sexual abuse or child sexual exploitation; allegations (substantiated or not) of individuals having engaged in sexual activity with, or having a sexual interest in, children; institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse or other exploitation. Details of any complaints made about such matters will be retained.

10. TRAINING

10.1 The school will ensure that guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

10.2 The level and frequency of training depends on role of the individual member of staff.

10.3 The school maintains written records of all staff training.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed when there are changes in the law or at least every two years, to assess implementation and effectiveness.

This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Appendix 1 Stage 1 - Informal Concerns and Difficulties

If you have any concerns about the Academy, or the education we are providing at any time, please discuss the matter with your child's Academic Year Leader or Vice Principal at the earliest opportunity. It is **not** appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have on social networking sites. Please speak, or write, to someone at the Academy at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means.

The Academy considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at Academy and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it.

Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to your child's Academic Year Leader or the Vice Principal you are still concerned please discuss the matter with the Principal.

1 Informal resolution of a concern or difficulty

1.1 We expect that most concerns and difficulties can be resolved informally.

2 Who to contact

2.1 In most cases a teacher or the school office will be approached first. This can be done in person, by telephone, email or in writing. The matter may be referred to a more senior member of staff if a teacher is uncertain how to resolve the issue.

2.2 Once a concern or difficulty has been raised, the person raising the concern will be contacted and told what action is being taken and the likely timescales involved.

2.3 Such action may include enquiries being made and/or a meeting with the person raising the concern. Should a meeting be appropriate, the complainant's views on what they think might resolve the issue will be sought during the course of it.

2.4 The aim is for the concern or difficulty to be resolved within **15 school days** of it being raised.

2.5 If the person raising the concern is dissatisfied with the response to the concern or difficulty, they may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure, as set out in **Appendix 2**.

2.6 If the member of staff dealing with the concern or difficulty believes it to be a more serious complaint or issue, they should refer it to a more senior member of staff. In this situation, it is likely that the complaint will then move to stage 2, as set out in **Appendix 2**.

3 Complaints about the Principal

3.1 The procedure for informally raising a concern or difficulty about the Principal is set out below:

3.1.1 A concern or difficulty can be raised directly with the Principal if it is felt that the matter is capable of resolution informally. It may be raised orally or in writing. If it is raised in writing, it will not automatically

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

be treated as a formal complaint under Stage 2, as the Principal will endeavour to resolve the matter raised informally under Stage 1;

3.1.2 The Principal will usually seek to resolve the concern or difficulty through direct conversation or a meeting with the person raising the concern, which should usually take place within **15 school days** of the matter being raised;

3.1.3 If the person raising the concern is dissatisfied with the Principal's response to the concern or difficulty raised, they may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure, as set out in **Appendix 2**.

3.2 Alternatively, the person raising the concern may choose to make a formal complaint about the Principal in writing to the Chair of Governors. In this case, the complaint will be treated as a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure, as set out in **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 2 Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1, however if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you can let us know in person, by telephone or in writing.

There is a complaint form (Appendix 4) attached to this procedure which can be helpful to complete. The aim of the form is to give us as clear an understanding as possible of your complaint and includes a section on what actions you feel would resolve the problem.

1 How to make a formal complaint

1.1 Complaints will usually only progress to Stage 2 after the matters raised have been considered informally under Stage 1, and where the person raising the concern indicates that they intend to escalate a matter to the formal stage.

1.2 There may, however, be some instances where it is determined that the matters raised should therefore be dealt with formally at Stage 2 immediately, without being considered at Stage 1.

1.3 The formal complaint must be in writing. There is a form in Appendix 5 which can be used for this purpose. The complaint should be addressed to the Principal and should include:

1.3.1 A copy of all relevant documents and full contact details; and

1.3.2 Details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired.

1.4 The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, email or letter within **3 school days**, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescales.

2 Investigation

2.1 The subject matter of the complaint will be investigated in the most appropriate manner, which may include some or all of the following steps:

2.1.1 Delegation of the investigation to a senior member of staff;

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

2.1.2 Involvement of one or more Governors;

2.1.3 Request for additional information from the complainant, including what they think might resolve the issue (if not already requested at Stage 1); and

2.1.4 Request for a conversation and/or a meeting with the complainant personally and/or others with relevant knowledge of the circumstances.

2.2 Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Where the investigation has been delegated to a senior member of staff, he/she will prepare a report on the investigation which will be considered by the Principal. Personal data may be redacted and names anonymised or cyphered in line with data protection principles.

3 Decision

3.1 The Principal will notify the complainant by email or letter of his/her Stage 2 decision and the reasons for it within **15 school days** from receipt of the formal complaint.

3.2 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to the complaint, the complainant can request that the complaint be referred to a Complaint Panel under Stage 3 using the procedure set out in Appendix 3.

4 Complaints about the Principal

4.1 The procedure for making a formal complaint about the Principal is set out below:

4.1.1 The complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors. The written complaint should include a copy of all relevant documents and full contact details and details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired.

4.1.2 The Chair of Governors will acknowledge the complaint by telephone, email or letter within **3 school days** of receipt and indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale. Such action may include an investigation and/or a meeting with the complainant.

4.1.3 The complainant will receive a response to the complaint within **15 school days**.

4.1.4 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, the complainant can request that the complaint be referred to a Complaint Panel under Stage 3, using the procedure set out in **Appendix 3**.

5 Complaints about Governors

5.1 The procedure for making a formal complaint about individual governors or the governing board is set out below:

5.1.1 A complaint about an individual governor or about an entire governing board should be put in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Board. The written complaint should include a copy of all relevant documents and full contact details and details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired.

5.1.2 The Clerk will acknowledge the complaint by telephone, email or letter within **3 school days** of receipt and indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

5.1.3 The Clerk will refer the matter to a suitably skilled and impartial member of the governing board if the complaint is about an individual governor and to Trustees in the case of a complaint against the Chair, Vice-Chair or the whole Governing Board. Trustees will decide on an appropriate course of action which will depend upon the nature of the complaint.

5.1.4 The complainant will receive a response to the complaint within **15 school days**.

5.1.5 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, the complainant can request that the complaint be referred to a Complaint Panel under Stage 3, using the procedure set out in **Appendix 3**.

Appendix 3 Stage 3 – Hearing by a Complaint Panel (Hearing)

At this stage the complaint will be considered by a panel of two governors and a person who is independent of the management and running of the school who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the Governing Board.

Panel members will have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of your request. You will have the opportunity to submit evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish, to put your case. The Principal will be given the same opportunities. Appendix 3 outlines the process that will be followed at a panel hearing.

1 Complaint Panel Hearing

1.1 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to the complaint, the complainant can request a Complaint Panel Hearing (**Hearing**).

1.2 A Hearing is a hearing to consider those elements of the Stage 2 response to the complaint with which the complainant remains dissatisfied. The Complaint Panel is not obliged to consider any new complaints which have not been previously raised.

2 How to request a Hearing

2.1 A request for a Hearing must be put in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Board and will usually only be considered if the procedure at Stage 2 has been completed.

2.2 The written request should include:

2.2.1 A copy of all relevant documents and full contact details;

2.2.2 Details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired;

2.2.3 A list of the documents which the complainant believes to be in the school's possession and wish the Complaint Panel to consider; and

2.2.4 Whether the complainant proposes to be accompanied to the Hearing (see paragraph 3.5 below).

2.3 If assistance with the request is required, for example because of a disability, please inform the Clerk to the Governing Board who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

2.4 The Clerk to the Governing Board will acknowledge the request for a Hearing in writing within **3 school days** of receipt.

2.5 Every effort will be made to enable the Hearing to take place within **15 school days** of receipt of the request.

2.6 A complainant may withdraw their request for a Hearing at any point up to and including the intended date of the Hearing.

3 Planning the Hearing

3.1 The Clerk to the Governing Board will send written notification to each party of the date, time and place of the Hearing at least **10 school days** before the date of the Hearing.

3.2 Copies of any documents (additional to those specified in 2.2.1 and 2.2.3) that the complainant wishes the Complaint Panel to consider should be sent to the Clerk to the Governing Board to be received at least **7 school days** prior to the Hearing.

3.3 The Clerk to the Governing Board will circulate a copy of the bundle of documents to be considered by the Complaint Panel to all parties at least **3 school days** prior to the Hearing.

3.4 The complainant may be accompanied at the Hearing, for example by a relative or friend. The Hearing is an internal process, not legal proceedings, and legal representation is therefore inappropriate and unnecessary.

3.5 If the complainant wishes to be accompanied by a relative or friend who is legally qualified, the Parent is required to notify the Clerk to the Governing Board in the initial request for a Hearing. The complainant should note that the Complaint Panel will wish to speak to that person directly prior to the Hearing, and they will not be permitted to act as an advocate or address the Complaint Panel at the Hearing unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Complaint Panel.

3.6 A person will be appointed to take a minute of the Hearing.

4 Composition of the Complaint Panel

4.1 The Complaint Panel will comprise at least three individuals who have no detailed prior knowledge of the circumstances of the complaint, including at least one person who is independent of the management and running of the school (i.e. they will not be a Director/Trustee, a Governor at any of the Trust's academies, or an employee of the Trust at any of its academies).

4.2 The complainant may ask the Clerk to the Governing Board to inform them who has been appointed to sit on the Complaint Panel ahead of the Hearing. Fair consideration will be given to any reasonable objection to a particular member of the panel.

4.3 The Complaint Panel members will appoint one of their number to be the Chair of the Complaint Panel throughout the proceedings.

5 Role of the Complaint Panel

5.1 The role of the Complaint Panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that have been made by considering:

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

5.1.1 the documents provided by both parties; and

5.1.2 any representations made by the parties

and to reach a decision as to whether or not to uphold each complaint.

6 At the Hearing

What to expect:

- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses (if any).
- The Principal/Chairman of Governors may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Principal/Chairman of Governors is then invited to explain the Academy's actions and be followed by the Academy's witnesses (if any).
- The complainant may question both the Principal/Chairman of Governors and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Principal/Chairman of Governors is then invited to sum up the Academy's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chairman of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five Academy days.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The clerk remains to support the panel.

6.1 The Hearing should proceed notwithstanding that the complainant may decide not to attend. In these circumstances, the Complaint Panel will consider the complainant's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint in the usual way.

6.2 During the Hearing, the parties shall have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments in an appropriate manner. The Hearing is not a legal process and the Complaint Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account.

6.3 All statements made at the Hearing will be unsworn. The parties will be entitled to write their own notes for reference purposes.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

6.4 All those present during the Hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the Hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the Hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his/her comment will be minuted.

6.5 The Chair may, at his/her discretion, adjourn the Hearing if he/she considers it appropriate to do so. This may include an adjournment for the parties to take legal advice on a specific issue arising.

6.6 A Hearing before the Complaint Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media (including social media).

6.7 When the Chair of the Complaint Panel is satisfied that sufficient consideration has been given to the documentation provided and any representations made by the parties, he/she will conclude the Hearing.

7 Decision

Outcome of the Panel Hearing

The panel will write to the complainant within 5 working days of the meeting, and its decision is final. If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education, who can review whether the Academy has acted reasonably and followed the correct procedures.

The Academy's Complaint Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained Academies in England on behalf of the Secretary of State and can be contacted via: -

- National Helpline 0370 000 2288
- online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus
- by writing to the Department for Education, Academy Complaints Unit, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

7.1 The Complaint Panel will make findings about each complaint on the balance of probabilities, and may make recommendations.

7.2 It is not within the powers of the Complaint Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on the Academy's staff, students or parents, although the Complaint Panel may make recommendations.

7.3 The Complaint Panel's findings and any recommendations will be provided in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, within **5 school days** of the Hearing.

7.4 The Complaint Panel's findings and any recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the school's premises by the Trust and the Principal.

7.5 The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the school's complaints procedure.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Appendix 4 Unreasonable Complaints

1 Chiltern Hills Academy is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with us. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

2 We adopt the Department for Education definition of unreasonable complaints as those made by persons who, because of the frequency or nature of their contact with the school or the Trust, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints.

3 Unreasonable complaints are taken seriously as they put a strain on valuable resources and hinder the progress of proper investigations. A complaint may be judged to be unreasonable by assessing a number of factors, including those that are outlined below.

4 A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

4.1 refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;

4.2 refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;

4.3 refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;

4.4 insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;

4.5 introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;

4.6 makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;

4.7 changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;

4.8 repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

4.9 refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where our complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;

4.10 seeks an unrealistic outcome;

4.11 makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

5 A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- 5.1 maliciously;
- 5.2 aggressively;
- 5.3 using threats, intimidation or violence;
- 5.4 using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- 5.5 knowing it to be false;
- 5.6 using falsified information;
- 5.7 publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

6 A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if it is manifestly unjustified, inappropriate, or an improper use of formal procedure. In assessing this, the school shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and the nature of the complaint itself rather than the nature of the complainant. In assessing all of the circumstances of the case, a school will consider a range of factors including:

- 6.1 whether a complaint has reasonable foundation;
- 6.2 the history and context of the complaint (and any evidence where relevant);
- 6.3 whether the time and cost of investigating the complaint is proportionate to the issue(s) complained of;
- 6.4 whether an investigation of the complaint is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress;
- 6.5 unexplained delay in raising a complaint or issue;
- 6.6 if the purpose of the complaint is to obtain an outcome which is unavailable via the complaints procedure, such as a claim for compensation, damages or a refund of fees paid;
- 6.7 any evidence of a complaint being brought for an improper purpose.

7 Whenever possible, the Principal will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before dismissing a complaint as unreasonable. The Principal will normally only do so after consultation with the Chair of the Governing Board.

Serial or Persistent Complaints

Unfortunately, in a small minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the Academy. These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the Academy has concluded the complaint investigation.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

In such cases, the Academy will follow advice from the Department for Education and the Local Government Ombudsman.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Complaint Form

Please complete and return this form to the Principal who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. (If the complaint is about the Principal you should contact the Chair of Governors. You should contact the Clerk to the Governing Board should the complaint relate to governors.)

Your name:
Child's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the child (if relevant):
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Email address:
Please provide concise details of your complaint including dates, names of witnesses etc to allow the matter to be fully investigated.
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to/write to and what was the response?)
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

ACADEMY USE

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

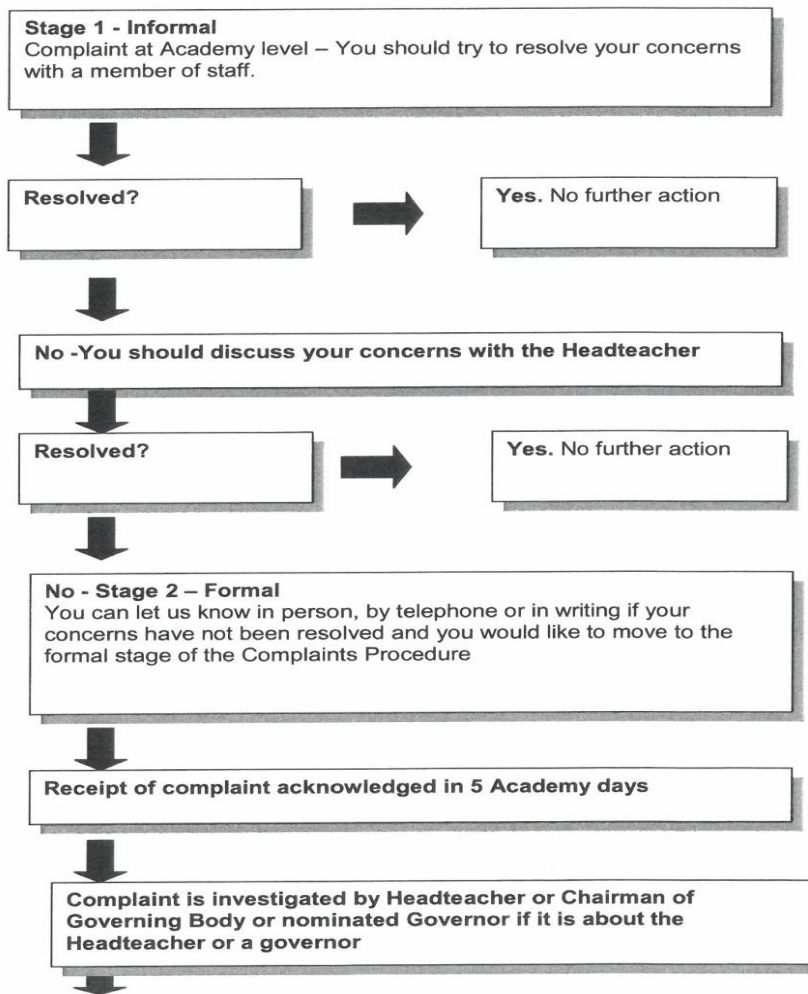
Date:

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

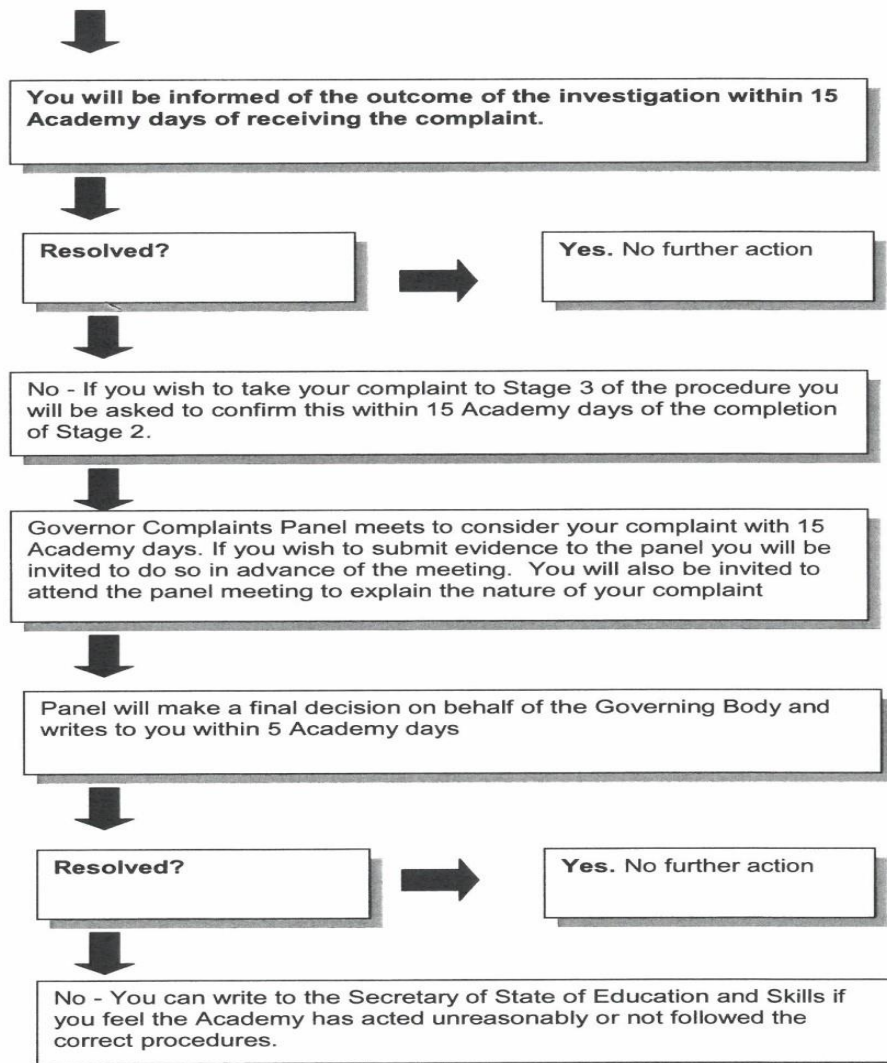
Appendix 5

Flowchart Summary*

* Please refer to the procedure for more detailed information.



COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS



COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Appendix 6

Time	Agenda for Complaints Panel meeting			
5 minutes	1.	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All present will be welcomed to the meeting and reminded that the meeting will be as informal as possible Introductions of everyone present and clarification of the complaint lodged and conduct of the meeting 	Chair of the Panel
15 minutes	2.	Complainants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a <u>summary</u> of complaint highlighting points made in their written complaint and other documentation Witnesses are called as and when required Panel questions to clarify the points they make The school representative will be given the opportunity to ask questions and these will be confined to points for clarification 	Complainant/ Panel/School
15 minutes	3.	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a <u>summary</u> of their case highlighting points made in the written response and other documentation Witnesses are called as and when required The Complainant will be given the opportunity to ask questions and these will be confined to points for clarification 	School/Panel/ Complainant
10 minutes	4.	Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel questions Investigator to clarify the points raised in their report 	Investigator/ Panel
5 minutes	5.	Complainant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarises their case, highlighting evidence including anything that has emerged in the questioning 	Complainant
5 minutes	6.	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarises the case for the school including the school's response and actions in relation to the complaint before the meeting and anything that has emerged in the questioning 	School
5 minutes	7.	Thank you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complainant, Investigator and School Representative are thanked for attending Panel gives an indication of when they can expect to hear the outcome 	Chair of the Panel
Around 30 minutes	8.	Deliberations/ Post meeting actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel considers all the evidence and comes to its conclusion The Complainant and School are advised in writing of the conclusions and any recommendations (within 5 school days of the meeting) 	Panel/Clerk

Points to Note:

- The Panel may ask questions and adjourn the meeting at any point.
- Complainants, Investigator and Principal will be invited to question each other but these must not

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS

be personal in nature.

- The meeting will continue in absentia should either or both parties opt to leave (or fail to attend at all).
- The meeting is informal, not adversarial, and everyone will be treated with respect.
- The aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- The Panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. **New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.**
- Remind all parties that the meeting is confidential. This means they must not share any details about the meeting with anyone who is not present.
- The Governing Board and Panel do not have the power to change the school's decision – only to review how it dealt with the situation and make recommendations if appropriate.

COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS
